

A meeting of the Health and Safety Executive Committee was held at 10:00 on
Wednesday 4 December 2019, venue, the Syndicate Room, Old Schools.

Minutes

Present: Professor David Cardwell, (Chair), Pro-Vice Chancellor, Strategy and Planning, Dr Mick Mantle, Department of Chemical Engineering. Dr Caroline Edmonds, Secretary of the School of Clinical Medicine, Ms Emma Stone, Director of Human Resources.

In attendance: Dr Martin Vinnell, Director of Health and Safety, Mr Phillip Rule, Programme Manager Compliance and Asset Management Lead, Mr Jerry Headley, Interim Director of Estate Management, Mrs Dee Vincent, Registry's Office (Minutes)

Apologies: Dr Graham Christie, Dr Tamsin O'Connell, Dr Jessica Gardner, Dr Richard Sandford, Ms Emma Rampton

1. Declarations of interest:

There were no declarations of interest.

2. Minutes of the Last Meeting:

The minutes of the meeting held on 3 June 2019 were **approved**, an update on matters arising from the previous meeting were provided.

2.1 Atlas Building:

Since the last HSEC meeting the Planning and Resources Committee have been appraised of the urgent concerns regarding the dilapidation of the Atlas building. The Director of Health and Safety has met with departments who store materials on the site and require access. A plan of action has been agreed to remove the materials. It was noted that Childcare department use an area within the site but this is separate to the area that is derelict. It was further noted that numerous attempts of break in have occurred on the site, necessitating a further level of security.

2.2 Staff counselling:

The University counselling service is now located at Bene't Place, the service is entitled *Staff Counselling Centre*.

Principal Business

3. Compliance Update

The Interim Head of Compliance provided an update on progress. The Committee were advised that Philip Rule had recently been appointed, Programme Manager for the Estates Department. Mr Rule will lead the compliance and asset management programme. The Committee were also informed that some staff have been migrated from Laundry Farm to Greenwich House. It is anticipated that the move will enable focused reconfiguration of effort within the team.

Work continues at operational level with regards to the implementation and delivery of SLAs.

The Committee received a tabled report outlining the progress made with the compliance and asset management programme and the timeline to improve compliance. It was noted that a more detailed report will be provided to next meeting of Buildings Committee and the Health and Safety Executive Committee; the format of the report is currently under review.

Action: Estate Management

The Committee were further advised that changes to staffing within the Estates team have been broadly well received. Work continues on refining the staffing structure with on-going support from the HR department. The Committee felt that advice from the internal communications team should be explored, this would help mitigate against any unhelpful rumours being circulated.

Action: Estate Management

The Committee thanked the Estates team for the update and noted that steady progress is being made.

4. HSE and Other Enforcement Agency Action, Visits and Information

The Director of Health and Safety reported that since July there have been three visits to the University; two from Counter Terrorism Security Adviser and one from the Animal and Plant Health Agency. It was noted that these were routine, scheduled visits.

Over the next 12 months, a focus area for Agency attention will be “stress” as a harm causing agent. Organisations will have a duty of care to put in place systems for identifying stress. The Director of Health and Safety explained that the University induction course will cover this topic. The University is hoping to produce an on-line stress identification model to ensure that mental health resilience is addressed and eventually available to all new employees.

The Committee were advised that recorded staff absences due to stress may now trigger an Agency response. The Director of HR agreed to update relevant HR staff on this matter.

Action Director of HR

The Committee thanked the Director of Health and Safety for the report.

5. Consultative Committee for Safety

The Committee received the minutes of the Consultative Committee for Safety dated 19 November 2019, and noted the contents.

6. Audit summary

The Director of Health and Safety reported that the schedule of auditing sports clubs has commenced. All audited work is now placed on-line which offering immediate information and feedback.

7. Safety Report Update

7.1 Occupational Health. The Director of Health and Safety reported on the work of the Occupational Health Service. There has been a rise in complex referrals, some of which require intervention at physician level. It was noted that due to sickness absence and maternity leave during the year, the service had not been able to meet all statutory timeframes for returning on health issues.

The Director of Health and Safety reminded the committee that the University no longer employs its own Occupational Health Physician; services are procured from NHS Services. It was noted that the services provided are of exceptional quality but NHS Services are under increasing pressure when recruiting Doctors and this leaves the University vulnerable in ensuring maintenance of the service. The new contract for the NHS service has been renewed for a period of three years, providing 5 day per week provision – an increase of 0.2FTE on previous years, needed to cover the additional case load.

7.2 Waste disposal. The University operates a centralised waste disposal service and centrally oversees chemical waste, these are covered by a managed budget allocation. The Director of Health and Safety explained that it is increasingly likely that a centralised contract with a biological waste provider, possibly linked into a chemical waste contract would offer significant financial and compliance advantages for the University. Staff are working closely with colleagues in Procurement to consider the use of a centralised contract, departments will still be responsible for paying for the service. It is likely that a Policy will be drafted in relation to the requirements of departments to use a single provider the Policy will come back to HSEC for ratification.

Action: Director of Health and Safety

8. Any Other Business:

8.1 The Committee were advised that following the fatal attack at Fishmonger's Hall; the Staff Counselling Service has refocused resource to work with staff and students from the Department of Criminology.

8.2 The Director of Health and Safety mentioned that ongoing work continues to create a framework to support staff and students when travelling abroad. The Study Away Risk Assessment Committee (SARAC) considers high risk applications, taking into account the risk arising from the area visited, the work being undertaken and personal circumstances.

SARAC's role is to support departments by making final decisions on high-risk applications to study, or work away. Ensuring that a consistent approach is taken towards high risk across the University.

9. Date of next meeting of the HSEC

The next meeting of the Health and Safety Executive Committee for the academic year 2020 will be held on:

Wednesday 18th March 2020, 14:00 – 15.30

Venue: The Syndicate Room

Other meetings are scheduled as follows:

- 4th June 2020, 10.00 – 11.30: venue: General Board Office
- 9th December 2020, - 14:00 15:30 venue; General Board Office